



# Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

2017 - present

# Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

## Section 1: Introduction

Missouri recognizes that inequities exist in students' access to great teachers and school leaders across the United States. Students of color, students from low-income families, rural students, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students who struggle academically are less likely than their peers to have such access. The causes of these inequities vary from place to place and context to context, with numerous policy, practice, economic, and socio-cultural factors at play. Because of the multiple causes for inequity in teacher and leader distribution, the solutions must be systemic rather than merely treating the symptoms.

As a student progresses through Missouri's PK-12 public education system, it is their right to learn under the direction of effective teachers at every grade level and in every content area. The primary problematic equity outcome in the state of Missouri is that this likely does not occur. Along every student's education experience, there is reason to believe that virtually all students, at some point, learn from less-than-effective teachers. Current Missouri data suggest that high-poverty, high-minority and rural students experience less effective teachers at a higher rate than do students in more affluent schools.

According to federal guidance, less effective teachers are those who are inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field<sup>1</sup>. A separate effectiveness index is included in addition to considering the experience, qualifications and assignments of teachers. The inequity issue the Missouri Plan addresses is that inexperienced, unqualified, out-of-field and less-effective teachers are more prevalent in high-poverty, high-minority and rural schools than in more affluent schools.

In alignment with federal guidance, "poor" students are those from "low-income families" and are identified by eligibility for free and reduced priced lunch (FRPL). Minority students are those who are non-white and include Hispanic students of any race. Students in schools categorized as "Rural: Remote" are in communities 25 miles from an urbanized area and also 10 miles from an urban cluster. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), urbanized areas and clusters are "densely settled cores of census blocks with adjacent densely settled surround areas. When the core contains a population of 50,000 or more, it is designated as an urbanized area. Core areas with populations between 25,000 and 50,000 are classified as urban clusters." By contrast, more affluent students are those from higher-income families and are determined using the same free and reduced priced lunch eligibility criteria.

Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) supports reforms and innovations to improve educational opportunities for low achieving students. Title

I is designed to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. (ESEA section 1001). To this end, Title I helps State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools meet the educational needs of low-achieving students in schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families.

To illuminate potential areas of educational inequity for Missouri students, a comparative analysis was completed using the following groups of schools:

- 314 schools with the highest percent of minority students (non-white and Hispanic of any race) referenced as high-minority schools
- 314 schools with the highest percentage of students eligible for FRPL referenced as high-poverty schools
- Title I Schools (1,199 schools). Schoolwide or Targeted
- Schools classified as “Rural: Remote” (352 schools) referenced as rural schools
- Non-Title I Schools (945 schools)
- 314 schools with the lowest percentage of students eligible for FRPL referenced as more affluent schools

The decision to focus on these particular 314 schools in the various categories was based on several factors. First, looking at schools at the highest and lowest percentage of students eligible for FRPL and only those categorized as Rural: Remote provided a manageable number of schools to analyze. This comparative analysis focuses on a non-duplicative total of 314 schools representing the poorest, most affluent, highest concentration of minority students, and the most rural in the state. It was additionally theorized that strategies developed for these schools would be applicable as well for schools with similar but less concentrated demographics.

The 314 schools with the highest percentage of minority students represent 59 LEAs, with 44.1 percent of them in St. Louis and St. Louis City, and 42.4 percent in the Kansas City Public Schools. Charter schools comprise 19.1 percent. Due to significant overlap, Missouri generally treated these groups together when identifying root causes and strategies in this plan. Approximately 80.9 percent of the schools with the highest percentage of minority students are elementary or middle schools, while 19.1 percent of them extend to the 12th grade. Student enrollment in these schools ranges between 12 students and 2,223 students, with an average minority, or non-white, concentration of 85.3 percent. In these schools, 33.0 percent of the teachers are minority, or non-white.

The 314 schools with the highest percentage of FRPL-eligible students represent 84 LEAs, with 29.3 percent of them in St. Louis and St. Louis City and 20.7 percent in the Kansas City school district. An additional 12.1 percent of them are charter schools. Approximately 78.7 percent of the schools are elementary or middle schools, while 21.3 percent of them extend to the 12th grade. These 314 schools have FRPL rates at 100 percent. Student enrollment in these schools ranges between 11 students and 1,701 students, with an average minority, or non-white, concentration of 62.0 percent. In these schools, 25.3 percent of the teachers are minority, or non-white.

The schools categorized as Title schools represent 1,199 schools (Targeted: 249 or Schoolwide: 950). Approximately 93.8 percent of Title schools are elementary or middle schools, while 6.2 percent of them extend to the 12th grade. Student enrollment in these schools ranges between 12 students to 1,282 students with an average minority, or non-white, concentration of 28.3 percent. In these schools, 9.3 percent of the teachers are minority, or non-white.

The schools categorized as Rural: Remote represent 163 school districts/LEAs. These school districts/LEAs are located in all regions of the state except the St. Louis and Kansas metro areas. The regions with the most schools are the Northeast, Northwest, West Central and South Central. Approximately 60.0 percent of the schools are elementary or middle schools, while 40.0 percent of them extend to the 12th grade. Student enrollment in these schools ranges between 18 students to 601 students with an average minority, or non-white, concentration of 3.4 percent. In these schools, 0.9 percent of the teachers are minority, or non-white. On average, 60.7 percent of the students are FRPL eligible.

The schools categorized as Non-Title schools represent 945 schools. Approximately 51.0 percent of Non-Title schools are elementary or middle schools, while 49.0 percent of them extend to the 12th grade. Student enrollment in these schools ranges between 22 students to 2,494 students with an average minority, or non-white, concentration of 14.5 percent. In these schools, 6.7 percent of the teachers are minority, or non-white.

The 314 schools with the lowest percentage of FRPL-eligible students represent 69 school district/LEAs, with 14.7 percent of them located in either the Lee's Summit or Rockwood school districts. These school district/LEAs are located predominantly in the St. Louis or Kansas City suburban areas or the central part of the state. Approximately 75.2 percent of the schools are elementary or middle schools, while 24.8 percent of them extend to the 12th grade. The FRPL rate in these schools ranges between 1.6 percent and 28.4 percent. Student enrollment in these schools ranges between 18 students and 2,494 students, with an average minority, or non-white, concentration of 14.7 percent. In these schools, 3.1 percent of the teachers are minority, or non-white.

Missouri's Educator Equity Plan was developed using data based on the comparison of these

six different sets of schools. A tentative timeline for the development of this plan is provided in the Educator Equity Work Plan in Appendix B.

### **Section 3: Equity Gaps**

#### **Data Analysis**

In comparing teachers in high-poverty schools to high-minority schools to the most rural schools to the more affluent schools to title schools to the non-title schools, the data illustrate potential areas of educational inequity across these schools. Missouri's Equity Plan offers possible root causes for issues illuminated by the data, as well as strategies for addressing the inequity of educational opportunity the data suggest.

Research suggests that “fully certified teachers have a statistically significant positive impact” in regard to areas of teaching and learning (Goldhaber, 2002). According to Missouri data, teachers who are less than fully qualified are more prevalent in schools with higher percentages of high-poverty and minority students. In high-poverty schools, 15.0 percent of teachers are less than fully qualified and 13.6 percent are in high-minority schools. In rural schools, 18.6 percent are less than fully qualified. In contrast, in low-poverty schools the percentage of less than fully qualified teachers is only 5.3 percent. The gap between the percentage of less than fully qualified teachers in more affluent schools and the rural schools is 16.4 percent. The gap is 16.2 percent between the affluent schools and the high-poverty schools, 12.8 percent for high-minority schools, 13.7 percent for Title schools and 6.2 percent for Non-Title schools.

A subset of teachers who are less than fully qualified are those who teach out-of-field. These teachers provide instruction in a subject that does not correspond to one or more of their active certification areas. Comparison data in this area are similar to that of less than fully qualified teachers. The percentage of those teaching out-of-field at the secondary level is relatively the same at 20.2 to 23.8 percent in high-poverty, high-minority and rural schools. This is over 16.0 percent more than the percentage in low-poverty schools. However, at the elementary level the gap is less. In high-poverty and rural schools, there are between 10.0 and 12.8 percent of out-of-field teachers. This is 9.0 percent less than elementary teachers in low-poverty schools. In high-minority schools, 9.3 percent of teachers are instructing out-of-field, which is 5.9 percent more than elementary teachers in low-poverty schools.

In addition to more teachers being less than fully qualified, data indicate they are less effective as well. This information was collected by creating an index reflecting how the teachers in a school overall rated in regard to performance levels in evaluation systems across the state. An effective teacher would rate in one of the upper levels of an evaluation system. Data collected

through the state's data reporting system on educator evaluation indicate that teachers in schools with high-poverty and high-minority students and in rural schools are collectively less effective than in low-poverty schools. On average, 81.8 percent of the teachers in schools with low numbers of FRPL students are collectively considered effective. In contrast, 80.1 percent of teachers in rural schools, 71.5 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools, 70.9 percent of teachers in high-minority schools, 78.6 percent of teachers in Title I schools, and 79.9 percent of teachers in Non-Title schools are collectively considered effective. This represents a gap in overall teacher effectiveness of 1.7 percent in rural schools and as much as 10.9 percent in high-minority schools.

A number of studies confirm that on average, "brand new teachers are less effective than those with some experience under their belts" (Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor 2007a, 2007b; Harris and Sass 2007; Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger 2006; Ladd 2008; Sass 2007). The teachers in the high-poverty, the high-minority and rural schools have less experience than teachers in the low-poverty schools. On average, teachers in low-poverty schools have 13.1 years of experience; teachers in rural schools have 12.0 years of experience; teachers in high-minority schools have 10.4 years of experience; teachers in high-poverty schools have approximately 10.7 years of experience; teachers in Title I schools have 11.6 years of experience and Non-Title schools have 12.5 years of experience. This means that students in high-poverty schools have on average teachers with 2.4 fewer years of experience than students in low-poverty schools.

Teachers' average years of experience in a school is affected by the extent of retention that occurs from one year to the next. Teachers in the low-poverty schools are retained at higher rates than teachers in the high-poverty, high-minority and rural schools. On average, 85.7 percent of teachers in low-poverty schools are retained from one year to the next as compared with 81.9 percent in the rural schools, 70.1 percent in high-minority schools, 71.7 percent in high-poverty schools, 79.4 percent in Title I schools, and 82.5 percent of teachers in Non-Title schools. In high-minority and high-poverty schools, that is a gap of 1.6 percent in teacher retention. The gap of retention over three years between low-poverty schools and rural schools is 8.5 percent.

In a brief written in 2010, Jennifer King Rice maintains that "teacher experience – or more accurately, teacher inexperience – is systematically related to teacher productivity." This generally means that teacher productivity is influenced by the experience level of the teacher. Additionally, as summarized by Goldhaber (2002), "A number of studies have found that fully certified teachers influence student achievement positively" (p. 5). Finally, a study by Papay and Kraft compared multiple methods for assessing the impact of teacher experience on student academic growth. Those methods converged on the finding that teachers improve most dramatically in the first year. Schools with the highest percentages of first-year teachers likely have the steepest climb in developing effective teachers. In light of this, Missouri's

equity plan defines “inexperienced teachers” as those who are in their first year of teaching, since the first year is so crucial in terms of teacher effect.

The percentage of first-year teachers in high-poverty, high-minority and rural schools is greater than in low-poverty schools. In schools with high numbers of minority students, 12.0 percent of teachers are first-year teachers. In rural schools, 7.3 percent of teachers are first-year teachers. In schools with high-poverty, 12.3 percent of the teachers are in their first year. In low-poverty schools, only 4.0 percent of the teachers are first-year teachers. In Title I schools, 7.7 percent of teachers are first-year teachers. In Non-Title schools, 5.6 percent of teachers are first-year teachers. This shows a gap of 8.3 percent of first-year teachers between high-poverty and low-poverty schools.

Dissimilar percentages were found for first-year principals. Rural and low-poverty schools had a relatively low percentage of first-year principals (0.0 percent and 0.8 percent, respectively) as compared with high-poverty and high-minority schools (1.4 and 2.5 percent, respectively). Title I and Non-Title schools also had a moderately low percentage of first-year principals (1.0 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively).

Not only are there more first-year teachers in high-minority, high-poverty, and Title I schools, but they receive less mentor support. There are fewer first-year teachers in low-poverty schools and only 2.0 percent of them are not assigned a mentor. Remarkably and encouragingly, while there are a higher percentage of first-year teachers in rural schools than in low-poverty schools, only 1.5 percent of them are not assigned a mentor. However, in high-minority schools, 14.6 percent and high-poverty schools, 11.1 percent of first-year teachers do not receive a mentor. In Non-Title schools only 3.7 percent of first-year teachers do not receive a mentor.

First-year teachers and their principals are surveyed to measure how well the new teachers were prepared by their teacher education program. They are rated on a 1-5 scale, with ratings 4-5 representing preparation that was good and very good by the teacher education program. The first-year teachers in low-poverty schools gave higher ratings to the preparation they received than first-year teachers in high-minority, high-poverty, Title I, rural and Non-Title schools. The data showed that 91.2 percent of teachers in low-poverty schools gave a rating of good or very good; in high-minority schools, 80.6 percent of first-year teachers gave a rating of good or very good; in high-poverty schools, 80.1 percent of first-year teachers gave a rating of good or very good; in Title I schools, 84.5 percent of first-year teachers gave a rating of good or very good; in rural schools 81.2 percent of first-year teachers gave a rating of good or very good; and in Non-Title schools, 85.6 percent of first-year teachers gave a rating of good or very good. That is a difference in satisfaction ratings of 11.1 percent between first-year teachers in low-poverty schools and those in high-poverty schools.

Principals' ratings of first-year teachers were on average 0.5 percent to 11.2 percent lower than those of their first-year teachers. In high-minority schools, 71.0 percent of principals rated the preparation of their first-year teachers at good or very good; 80.6 percent of principals of first-year teachers in high-poverty schools rated their preparation at good or very good; 83.9 percent of principals rated the preparation of their first-year teachers as good or very good in Title I schools; 88.0 percent of principals of first-year teachers in rural schools gave a rating of good or very good; 82.7 percent of principals of first-year teachers in Non-Title I schools rated their preparation as good or very good; and 80.0 percent of principals of first-year teachers in low-poverty schools rated their preparation as good or very good. Overall, there was a difference of less than 10 percent in the ratings of principals in the high-minority and high-poverty schools and those in the low-poverty schools.

Salaries of the teachers in these six different categories of schools were analyzed as well. Among the six categories of schools, there is a large gap of \$7,944 in salaries of first-year teachers with a bachelor's degree. By year five, the gap widens to just under \$10,000, with the largest gap occurring between the low-poverty schools and the rural schools. Between years six and 10, the gap widens to more than \$12,000, with the largest gap remaining between low-poverty schools and rural schools. For teachers with more than 11 years of experience, the gap widens even further to more than \$17,000, with the largest gap remaining between the low-poverty schools and the rural schools.

Among the different categories of teachers, there was some variation with respect to teacher absenteeism. On average, students learn more from their regular classroom teacher than from a substitute teacher. "To the extent that less learning occurs when regular teachers are absent and student motivation is also reduced, student academic performance may suffer" (Ehrenberg, Ehrenberg, Rees, and Ehrenberg, 1991). It should be noted that days of absenteeism did not include administratively approved leave for professional development, field trips, or other off-campus activities with students. Teachers are absent more than 10 days per year in high-poverty, high-minority, and Non-Title schools as well as in low poverty schools. In high-poverty schools, 17.6 percent of the teachers are absent 10 days or more. In Non-Title schools, 18.9 percent of the teachers are absent 10 days or more. In high-minority schools, 22.0 percent of the teachers are absent 10 days or more. In low-poverty schools, 20.9 percent of the teachers are absent 10 days or more. In contrast, only 13.3 percent teachers in rural schools are absent 10 days or more and 18.0 percent of teachers in Title I schools are absent 10 days or more. There is a gap of 8.7 percent in teacher absenteeism between the rural schools and the high-minority schools.

One indication of a school's culture is the extent and severity of discipline issues. Research suggests that student discipline issues are strong predictors of math and science teacher turnover (Ingersoll & May, 2012). There is even evidence that discipline issues — or more

accurately, teachers' efficacy in managing them — influence teachers' ability to be effective. It may also be true that ineffective teachers with lower self-efficacy make more discipline referrals or are more likely to be perceived as weaker disciplinarians, creating a less conducive environment for learning (Dibapile, 2012).

Overall, there was very little difference in discipline incident rates between rural and low-poverty schools, less than a two percent difference in high-poverty and low-poverty schools, a two percent difference between high-minority and low-poverty schools, and less than one percent difference between Title I, Non-Title and low-poverty schools. When breaking that down further and looking at only elementary schools, there is one percent difference between low-poverty and high-minority schools and between 0.1 percent — 1.0 percent difference among low-poverty and high-poverty or rural, Non-Title and Title I schools. However, when looking only at secondary schools, there was a larger gap. Secondary schools show there was over a three percent difference between low-poverty and high-poverty schools, and between high-minority and low-poverty schools, the difference was over four percent.

The most important statistical difference between the separate categories of schools occurs in student performance. In high-minority schools, student proficiency in English language arts (ELA) is at 40.0 percent. Proficiency is 42.1 percent in high-poverty schools. Proficiency in English language arts (ELA) is at 57.7 percent for Title I schools and 60.6 percent for Non-Title schools. ELA proficiency is 60.0 percent in rural schools. In low-poverty schools, ELA proficiency is at 69.0 percent, more than 26 percentage points than high-minority or high-poverty schools.

Similar results occur in mathematics proficiency rates, although they are lower overall across all six categories of schools. In high-minority schools, math proficiency is at 27.6 percent and only slightly higher in high-poverty schools at 29.8 percent. In Title I schools, math proficiency is at 45.0 percent. Students in rural schools perform slightly better at 47.1 percent, Non-Title schools at 51.9 percent and low-poverty schools better still at 66.6 percent. Like ELA, students in low-poverty schools perform 39 percentage points higher than students in high-minority schools.

It is important to note that additional data were included as a result of stakeholder engagement. Building on the original set of data, and based on stakeholders' requests, the following additional data were added to the original data set:

- Title I and Non-Title Schools
- The percentage of minority teachers
- A more detailed look at teacher salary that includes first-year teachers with BA, first-year teachers with MA, teachers with five years of experience or less, and teachers with six to 10 years of experience

- In addition to percentages of first-year teachers, also added was the percentage of teachers with less than three years of experience

Stakeholders felt this additional data might be informative to further clarify issues that affect the learning of the students in the six categories of schools, identify potential root causes for the gaps and possible strategies to address those root causes.

The data just described were collected and summarized in the table that follows. The columns represent the six categories of schools: 314 high-minority schools with an average of 85.3 percent minority students; 314 high-poverty schools all with 100 percent FRPL students; 1,199 Title I schools (targeted or schoolwide); 352 schools classified as rural remote; 945 Non-Title schools; and 314 low-poverty schools with an average of 18.4 percent FRPL students. The rows represent different measures related to a positive school experience. Most of these measures specifically focus on the quality of the teachers and leaders in the six categories of schools.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Group 1 Highest Minority</b>	<b>Group 2 Highest FRPL</b>	<b>Group 3 Title Schools</b>	<b>Group 4 Most Rural</b>	<b>Group 5 Non-Title Schools</b>	<b>Group 6 Lowest FRPL</b>
FRPL rate	91.4%	100.0%	67.9%	60.7%	43.5%	18.4%
% of Minority (Students)	85.3%	62.0%	28.3%	3.4%	14.5%	14.6%
% of Minority (Teachers)	33.0%	27.4%	10.0%	0.5%	2.8%	2.1%
Discipline Incident Rate	2.5%	2.2%	0.8%	0.5%	1.1%	0.4%
• Elementary	1.1%	1.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
• Secondary	5.2%	4.5%	3.5%	0.8%	1.4%	0.9%
Average years of experience	10.4	10.7	11.6	12.0	12.5	13.1
Average Salaries	\$50,491.19	\$46,058.03	\$43,988.79	\$36,418.20	\$46,949.36	\$55,384.71
• 1 <sup>st</sup> year teacher w/Bacc	\$38,499.87	\$36,342.65	\$34,902.14	\$30,778.72	\$35,976.49	\$38,722.80
• 1 <sup>st</sup> year teacher w/Mast	\$44,802.21	\$44,390.76	\$41,373.41	\$34,817.80	\$41,806.29	\$44,306.73
• Teachers w/ 5 years of experience or less	\$41,872.79	\$39,112.41	\$37,250.11	\$32,841.77	\$39,345.49	\$42,744.14
• Teachers w/ 6-10 years of experience or less	\$47,980.60	\$44,452.02	\$41,970.36	\$36,429.98	\$44,483.19	\$48,771.78
• Teachers w/ 11+ years of experience	\$57,754.01	\$52,364.34	\$49,337.64	\$44,012.49	\$53,145.87	\$61,903.84
Retention Rate 1 year (2016-2017)	70.1%	71.7%	79.4%	81.9%	82.5%	85.7%
Retention Rate 3 year (2014-2017)	41.5%	48.7%	58.5%	60.2%	61.5%	68.7%
Absent 10 days or more	22.0%	17.6%	18.0%	13.3%	18.9%	20.9%
% First year teachers	12.0%	12.3%	7.7%	7.3%	5.6%	4.0%
% of Teachers with less than 3 years of experience	20.9%	20.4%	14.4%	13.8%	11.2%	7.9%
1 <sup>st</sup> Year Principals	2.5%	1.4%	1.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.8%
1 <sup>st</sup> year teachers assigned a mentor	85.4%	88.9%	95.8%	98.5%	96.3%	98.0%
Avg. overall preparation 1 <sup>st</sup> year Teacher response (%) Good/Very Good	80.6%	80.1%	84.5%	81.2%	85.6%	91.2%
Avg. overall preparation 1 <sup>st</sup> year Principal response (%) Good/Very Good	71.0%	80.6%	83.9%	88.0%	82.7%	80.0%
% Less than fully Qualified	13.6%	15.0%	9.7%	18.6%	11.2%	5.3%
• Elementary	10.0%	10.5%	7.9%	12.9%	2.1%	3.5%
• Secondary	20.5%	23.9%	21.4%	24.1%	13.9%	7.7%
% Teaching Out-of-Field	13.1%	14.6%	9.4%	18.4%	10.9%	5.1%
• Elementary	9.3%	10.0%	7.6%	12.8%	2.0%	3.4%
• Secondary	20.2%	23.4%	20.9%	23.8%	13.6%	7.5%
Effectiveness Index Overall teacher impact	70.9%	71.5%	78.6%	80.1%	79.9%	81.8%
Student Performance: ELA Proficient or Advanced	40.0%	42.1%	57.7%	60.0%	60.6%	69.0%
Student Performance: Math Proficient or Advanced	27.6%	29.8%	45.0%	47.1%	51.9%	66.6%

- **Group 1** — Highest Minority schools (314 schools). Non-White students and Hispanics of any race
- **Group 2** — Highest FRPL of schools (314 schools). Students eligible for Free and Reduced lunch
- **Group 3** — Title I Schools (1,199 schools: Targeted (249) or School-wide (950))
- **Group 4** — Most Rural Schools (352 schools). NCES Urbanicity Classification “Rural: Remote”
- **Group 5** — Non-Title Schools (945 Schools)
- **Group 6** — Lowest FRPL of schools (314 schools). Students eligible for Free and Reduced lunch

The data and related discussion to follow draw upon the most recent data available. In most cases, the data correspond to the 2016-17 school year. The “Definitions” section below indicates specific exceptions to this rule where applicable, as well as cases in which multiple years were combined.

Schools included in the analysis are all Missouri public elementary and secondary schools, except as follows:

- Area vocational/technical schools and alternative schools are excluded since data are reported at students’ regular schools in their home districts.
- Correctional facilities and medical treatment centers are excluded.
- Division of Youth Services sites is excluded.

To assist with interpreting the data contained in the chart, the following definitions and information are offered for each of the measures in the table:

**\*Poor student:** A student eligible for a free or reduced priced lunch (FRPL). The 314 schools with the highest rates of FRPL students (100 percent) are referred to as “high-poverty” schools. These are compared with the 314 schools with the lowest rates of FRPL students (1.6 – 28.4 percent), referred to as “low-poverty” schools. Data submitted by districts through Screen 15 of October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data system.

**\*Rural: Remote:** Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and also 10 miles from an urban cluster. The “rural: remote” designations used in this plan were extracted from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Elementary/Secondary Information System (ELSI) and correspond to the 2016-17 school year (most recent available data). Schools that meet these criteria are referred to as “rural schools”.

**\*Minority:** Non-white students, including Hispanic of any race. 314 schools with the highest average (85.3 percent) of minority students are referred to as “high-minority” schools. Data submitted by districts through Screen 16 of October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data system.

**\*Discipline rate:** The number of incidents divided by the number of students (incident is when a student is removed from the regular classroom half (1/2) a day or more). Data submitted by districts through Screen 09 of June Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data system.

**\*Retention rate:** Percent of teachers retained from 2016 to 2017 (one-year retention rate), or from 2014 to 2017 (three-year retention rate). A teacher is considered to be retained if, in 2017, he or she remained employed as a teacher in the same school where he or she was employed in either 2016 (for the one-year analysis) or 2014 (for the three-year analysis). Data submitted by districts through Screen 18 of the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data system.

**\*Absenteeism:** A teacher is absent if he or she is not in attendance on a day in the regular school year when the teacher would otherwise be expected to teach students in an assigned class. This includes both days taken for sick leave and days taken for personal leave. Personal leave includes voluntary absences for reasons other than sick leave. This does not include administratively approved leave for professional development, field trips or other off-campus activities with students. Absenteeism data were extracted from the U. S. Department of Education’s 2012-13 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC).

**\*Inexperienced teacher:** A first- year teacher. Data submitted by districts through Screen 18 of the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data system.

**\*Less than fully qualified (for the statutory term “unqualified”)** – A teacher who meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Is teaching on a provisional certificate
- Is teaching on a temporary authorization certificate
- Is lacking the necessary credential to be considered appropriately certified for at least one teaching assignment

Data is combined from Certification and data submitted by districts through Screen 20 of the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data system.

**\*Out-of-field:** A teacher who is considered inappropriately certified by virtue of teaching a subject that does not correspond to one or more of the teacher’s active certifications. Data is combined from Certification and data submitted by districts through Screen 20 of the October Cycle of the MOSIS/Core Data system.

**\*Effective Index:** An average overall rating of the general collective effectiveness of the teachers in a school. Since Missouri does not mandate a single evaluation model for all LEAs, an index was developed to summarize aggregate teacher effectiveness ratings for each school in the most consistent manner possible. On Screen 18a of Core Data, an annual data collection by the Department that occurs at the end of the school year, LEAs submit the number of teachers evaluated that year within each of the summative performance levels used in the local evaluation system. The data are reported in order of increasing effectiveness. The number of teachers in each level is assigned a point value equal to the rank position of the level. The total point value of the teachers’ collective ratings is then divided by the maximum points possible based on the parameters of the local system. For example, in a five-level system in which 10 teachers were evaluated, the

maximum point value possible would be 50 ( $10 \times 5 = 50$ ). If each teacher were rated at the second highest effectiveness level, that collective effectiveness would be worth 40 points ( $10 \times 4 = 40$ ). In this situation, the index would be calculated at .80 ( $40/50 = .80$ ).

According to a number of measures contained in the table, these data suggest that the learning experience of students in high-poverty, high-minority and rural schools compared to students in low-poverty schools is quite different. High-poverty, high-minority and rural students appear to learn from less-experienced, unqualified, out-of-field, or less-effective teachers at higher rates than occur in low-poverty school.

### **Missouri's Theory of Action**

Having used a variety of different measures to complete a comparative analysis between high-poverty, high-minority, rural and low-poverty schools; having engaged in discussions with representatives of multiple professional organizations; and having facilitated dialogue with educators across the state in high-poverty, high-minority and rural schools who face the real challenges of providing equitable educational opportunities for all of their students, the following Theory of Action is established to guide Missouri's Equity Plan:

When a high-quality, diverse pool of individuals is recruited into the teacher education programs in our state;

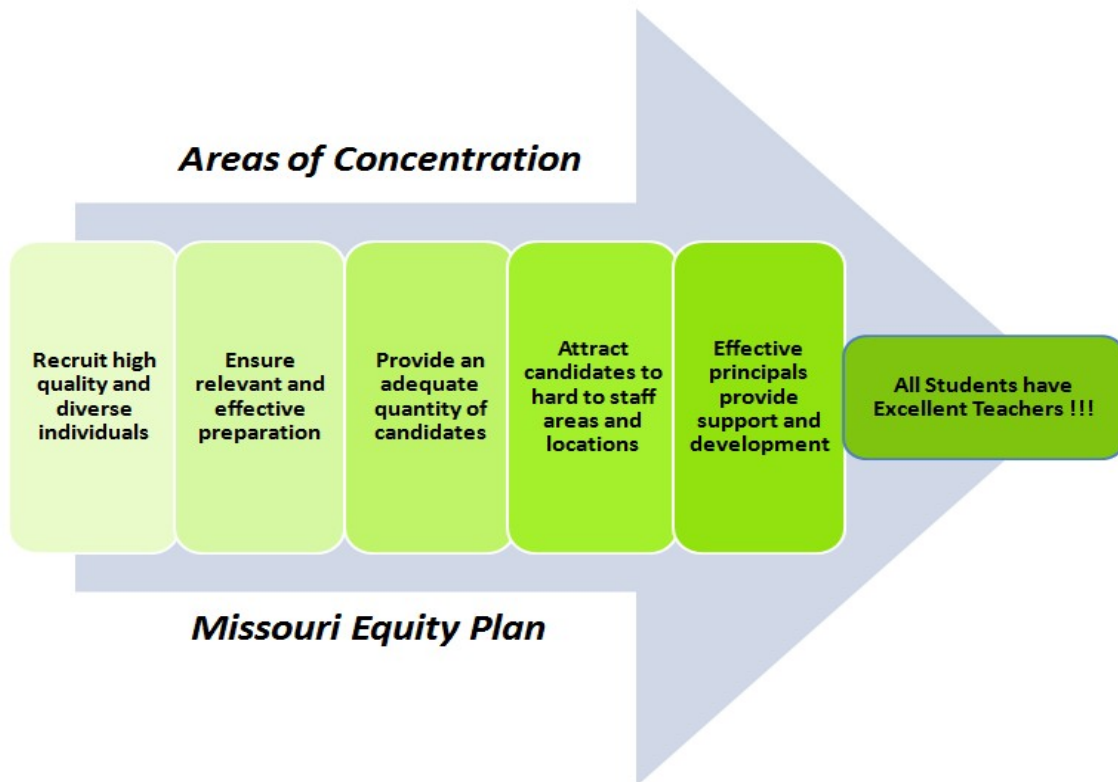
And when those individuals are fully prepared and qualified to be successful in any classroom as evidenced by rigorous high-quality content and performance assessments;

And when the quantity of high-quality teacher candidates is adequate to meet the needs of all schools at all grade levels and in all areas of content;

And when those individuals are attracted to teach in all types of educational settings and to work with all types of students, particularly those in high-poverty, high-minority and rural schools in our state;

And when those teachers are supported and developed and provided opportunities to collaborate and guide the learning opportunities of their students under the leadership of effective school administrators;

Then, each student in every classroom will have access to excellent teachers and leaders who will ensure access to excellent education.



### ESSA Leadership Learning Community (ELLC)

In January 2017, the state of Missouri was invited to join the ESSA Leadership Learning Community (ELLC). This learning community is sponsored by the Wallace Foundation and includes partnership organizations with the New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) and the National Urban League (NUL). ELLC includes participation from ten states (MO, MD, MN, NE, NY, OH, OR, PA, TN, WI). The purpose of ELLC is to “build the capacity of education leaders to implement supports and interventions to turn around schools most in need of improvement.” One of the indicators of success for ELLC is that each state will have “taken action on one of the commitments offered in the document *Leading for Equity*.”

In 2017, CCSSO and the Aspen Education and Society Program released the document *Leading for Equity: Opportunities for State Education Chiefs*. In this document, equity was defined as the following:

*In an equitable education system, personal and social identifiers such as gender, race, ethnicity, language, disability, family background, and/or income are not obstacles to accessing educational opportunities...*

*Leading for Equity* offered ten commitments that can be taken by state chiefs to create a more equitable education system in their state. While it may not be possible or realistic for the state agency to attempt to implement all of these commitments at one time, the document encouraged state chiefs and their leadership teams to use the commitments to identify the most pressing concerns and greatest opportunities and act on those. The ten commitments included the following (for a complete listing of the commitments and action steps, see Appendix A):

1. Prioritize Equity: Set and Communicate an Equity Vision and Measureable Targets
2. Start from Within: Focus on the State Education Agency
3. Measure What Matters: Create Accountability for Equity
4. Go Local: Engage Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Provide Tailored and Differentiated Support
5. Follow the Money: Allocate Resources to Achieve Fiscal Equity
6. Start Early: Invest in the Youngest Learners
7. Engage More Deeply: Monitor Equitable Implementation of Standards and Assessments
8. Value People: Focus on Teachers and Leaders
9. Improve Conditions for Learning: Focus on School Culture, Climate, and Social-emotional Development
10. Empower Student Options: Ensure Families Have Access to High-quality Educational Options that Align to Community Needs

The Missouri ELLC state first convened in February 2017. Since then, there have been state meetings approximately every other month and participation in five national meetings. Representation on the state team includes representatives from the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, the St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield school districts, the Missouri School Board Association, the state Teacher of the Year, higher education, and the offices of Educator Quality and Quality Schools at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The ELLC team used the commitments from *Leading for Equity* to prompt discussion and brainstorming about the critical inequity issues in Missouri. These commitments also prompted the ELLC team to think about ways to address these inequities.

The ELLC team has collaboratively worked to develop its own equity definition that meets the context of our state. This definition has evolved over time and continues to be revisited as the team continues its work together. The ELLC team wanted its definition to clearly address

conditions and circumstances that serve as obstacles to excellent teachers and leaders for each student. The ELLC team also wanted its definition to prompt ownership by each individual and their organization. The ELLC team's definition for equity is:

***Educational equity exists for each student when gender, race, ethnicity, language, disability, family background, and/or income are not obstacles to accessing educational opportunities.***

***To achieve this, \_\_\_\_\_ will implement the following strategies and measures.*** (You/Your Organization Name)

The ELLC team has collaboratively worked together to identify specific drivers to further the discussion and actions for creating equitable educational access for each student. The term driver typically refers to an individual responsible for moving something from one place to another place. In regards to ELLC work, a driver refers to something that will act as leverage or a catalyst in making something happens that is not happening now. The ELLC team identified the following drivers for its work:

- Key Driver #1: Using Policy to Promote Equity
- Key Driver #2: Using Networks to Promote Equity
- Key Driver #3: Training and Supporting Leaders for Equity
- Key Driver #4: Ensuring Excellent Educators for Each Student

Each of the drivers serves as leverage or a catalyst towards accomplishing particular objectives to address inequity. These objectives are organized within each driver. As the ELLC team continues to meet through 2020, measures and timelines will be established for each of the objectives listed below. This serves as the action plan that guides the work of Missouri in addressing areas of inequitable access to excellent education.

Key Driver	Objective
Key Driver #1: Using Policy to Promote Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MSIP6 Standards and Scoring Guide promote equity through district accountability</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ESSA Plan promotes equity through the expenditure of federal funds</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator licensure promotes leading for equity</li> </ul>

Key Driver	Objective
Key Driver #2: Using Networks to Promote Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner organizations and agencies support schools as they work to eliminate inequitable educational opportunities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity networks in different communities throughout the state support schools as they work to eliminate inequitable education</li> </ul>

Key Driver	Objective
Key Driver #3: Training and Supporting Leaders for Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS) provides training and support for principals who promote equity</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal supervisors support principals who are leading for equity</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity lab activities are integrated into the training and support for MLDS principals</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity lab activities are offered regionally to district leadership teams</li> </ul>

Key Driver	Objective
Key Driver #4: Ensuring Excellent Educators for Each Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grow Your Own (GYO) materials are revised and distributed for district use</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional associations and organizations support and promote GYO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A disposition instrument is used to help identify high school students with strong educator characteristics</li> </ul>

**Appendix A**  
***Leading for Equity: Opportunities for State Education Chiefs***  
**(CCSSO & The Aspen Institute, 2017)**

1. Prioritize Equity: Set and Communicate an Equity Vision and Measureable Targets
  - a) Make the case the equity benefits everyone in society.
  - b) Proactively initiate and lead conversations about equity.
  - c) Ensure that data are clear, accurate, and accessible to key stakeholders, with a focus on parents, legislators, and the media.
  - d) Collect, disaggregate, analyze and publicly share data on other indicators of long-term success.
  - e) Partner with stakeholders and other state actors to create urgency, establish public commitments, and set ambitious and achievable goals for addressing inequities in the state.
  - f) Assign state agency staff and allocate state agency funding to support data analysis and communications functions.
  - g) Once these commitments and goals have been established, chiefs should hold themselves and others in the state accountable for making progress, and celebrate success where it is achieved.
2. Start from Within: Focus on the State Education Agency
  - a) Lead conversations on the impact of poverty on education and advocate for the resources student and families need.
  - b) Talk directly about issues of race and equity and prepare the senior leadership team to speak effectively and comfortably about race and racism.
  - c) Make equity an agency-wide priority by setting equity-related goals within and across divisions that are tied to the state's broader goals and strategies.
  - d) Consider restructuring SEA roles to prioritize equity.
  - e) Diversify SEA staff.
  - f) Target more SEA funding toward outreach and communications, with a focus on directly engaging low-income families and families of color and building partnerships with organizations that have closer ties to families and community leaders.
3. Measure What Matters: Create Accountability for Equity
  - a) Include measures of proficiency and progress and growth in the accountability system.
  - b) Set ambitious and achievable interim and long-term goals for English learners and ensure they are making adequate progress achieving English language proficiency.
  - c) Collect data and report on school climate.

- d) Analyze and publicly report rates of identification for special education services.
  - e) Ensure the accountability system is relevant and meaningful to parents, students, and other stakeholders.
  - f) Partner with LEAs to ensure school improvement efforts are targeted to community needs and strengths.
- 4. Go Local: Engage Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Provide Tailored and Differentiated Support
  - a) Convene and build an ongoing dialogue with local leaders who hold different roles and perspectives on how to learn about promising practices and design new approaches to address inequity.
  - b) Provide targeted supports and guidance to districts to help teachers and leaders build and sustain excellent schools.
  - c) Encourage LEAs to explore and select culturally-relevant instructional materials and pedagogy that is aligned to state standards.
  - d) Highlight promising local practices for equity.
  - e) Require or incentivize participation in and funding for high-quality trainings that address the needs of the whole child.
  - f) Provide grants for innovative, local programs targeted at specific disadvantaged groups of students.
- 5. Follow the Money: Allocate Resources to Achieve Fiscal Equity
  - a) Advocate for equitable and adequate funding.
  - b) Offer fiscal guidance for LEAs on how to invest in high-leverage supports which are more likely to contribute to student academic success.
  - c) Monitor equitable distribution of local funds.
  - d) Prioritize coordination of public funding and services.
- 6. Start Early: Invest in the Youngest Learners
  - a) Advocate for increased funding for more children to attend high-quality pre-K.
  - b) Provide state funding, via formula or competitive grants, to improve the quality of publicly-funded pre-K programs tied to quality standards, and target areas with highest need.
  - c) Align pre-K/early learning standards to K-3 standards and provide professional development for pre-K and elementary school educators.
  - d) Modify suspension or expulsion policies for children in early childhood education programs and primary grades.
  - e) Prioritize trainings and resources on cultural and linguistic services for the early grades.
  - f) Engage in partnerships with related state agencies or divisions to ensure alignment across all programs.

7. Engage More Deeply: Monitor Equitable Implementation of Standards and Assessments
  - a) Monitor district course offerings and screening practices to determine whether low-income students and students of color are being provided a college-and career-ready course of study.
  - b) Remove financial barriers to college-and career-readiness.
  - c) Ensure that all students have access to high-quality instructional materials.
  - d) Check for bias in curriculum and assessment as part of state-level review of instructional materials, and assist LEAs in implementing strategies to detect bias in curriculum and assessment, particularly for locally-selected or designed materials.
  - e) Analyze the quality of assessments against rigorous standards and share learnings with LEAs.
  - f) Align career and technical education (CTE) with industry needs and career-readiness standards, and link to industry-recognized credentials.
  - g) Ensure students with disabilities and English learners have access to accommodations in instruction and assessment.
8. Value People: Focus on Teachers and Leaders
  - a) Determine where state equity plans have been successful, and celebrate this progress prominently to illustrate what is possible and to guide other systems.
  - b) Annually report on multiple indicators of the diversity of the educator workforce, including teachers, principals, and district leadership.
  - c) Analyze and monitor teacher licensure requirements and create new programs to increase diversity in the teaching profession.
  - d) Track and report on differential teacher retention and turnover rates.
  - e) Deliberately develop cultural competencies among aspiring and practicing educators so that educators are prepared to meet the needs of each student.
  - f) Initiate programs to ensure the school leadership pipeline prepares principals to lead in urban, rural, and other disadvantage or hard-to-staff districts.
  - g) Provide necessary guidance, information, and funding to train educators in mental health supports and intervention strategies.
  - h) Provide funding for teacher training on restorative justice.
9. Improve Conditions for Learning: Focus on School Culture, Climate, and Social-emotional Development
  - a) Measure and improve school culture as one important aspect of closing achievement gaps.
  - b) Work with LEAs to explore interventions to address chronic absenteeism.
  - c) Create a common framework and vocabulary for addressing students' social-emotional development and academic mindsets, and establish outcomes,

measures, and benchmarks for schools to pursue.

- d) Consider how best to integrate social-emotional development measures into state reporting and accountability systems, while acknowledging limitations of current measurement strategies.
- e) Invest in principals' ability to lead schools that support the whole child.
- f) Integrate analysis of teachers' ability to teach social-emotional competencies into licensure requirements and teaching frameworks.
- g) Revise exclusionary discipline policies and explore alternative strategies.
- h) Advocate for the state to direct additional funding and technical assistance toward mental and physical health services to schools with the greatest need.
- i) Provide incentives, competitive grants, or guidance to LEAs and local communities to design and offer school-based comprehensive services – such as community schools – to low-income communities and communities of color.

10. Empower Student Options: Ensure Families Have Access to High-quality Educational Options that Align to Community Needs

- a) Streamline open enrollment policies across districts and across schools within the same district.
- b) Incentivize inter-district choice programs that create more diverse schools.
- c) Invest in high-quality distance and virtual learning options.
- d) Subsidize the provision of transportation options for low-income families to access high-performing schools outside their community.
- e) Consider examining admissions processes and criteria for specialized schools, including charter schools and magnet schools, to ensure that admissions requirements or assessments are not limiting opportunity for otherwise qualified students.
- f) Support high-performing charter schools.
- g) Consider promoting diversity in schools by helping districts analyze student assignment and transportation patterns.
- h) Ensure all schools, including charters, are held accountable for providing high-quality education.